



WESTERN CAUCUS NEWS

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Congressional Western Caucus Agrees, It's Time to Modernize the Endangered Species Act

Washington D.C. – Members of the Congressional Western Caucus praised their colleagues on the House Resources Committee today for approving H.R. 3824, the Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act (TESRA), introduced by Committee Chairman Richard Pombo.

TESRA is a bipartisan bill that provides a new approach to endangered species recovery and seeks to better achieve conservation goals by enhancing the use of cooperation and collaboration between federal, state, and local stakeholders. It removes the conservation burden that has been unfairly imposed on private property owners and provides for compensation for private land owners losing use of their property. TESRA also requires a scientifically peer-reviewed recovery plan that actually sets out to recover a species.

“The current law is simply not working. A less than 1 percent recovery rate is unacceptable. We can and must do better. This legislation will foster a more collaborative relationship between landowners, state governments, the federal government, and all other stakeholders to create effective recovery plans based on sound science. This collaborative process is necessary if we are going to truly protect and recover our endangered species,” said **Congressman Jim Gibbons (NV)**, a cosponsor of the bipartisan bill.

“I commend Chairman Pombo for putting forth legislation which will allow our government to be more effective in protecting endangered species, while spending less time and money fighting extreme environmentalists in court,” said **Representative John T. Doolittle (CA)**.

Congressman John Peterson (PA) said, “The Endangered Species Act was an important and far-sighted bill when it passed in 1973, but not so far-sighted that it could’ve predicted the needs of our 21st Century environment. I think most reasonable folks can agree that a thorough and careful update of the Act is a good thing, and will go a long way toward ensuring its future viability. I’m glad that after three decades we were finally able to deliver that update – influenced by established science, and guided by basic tenets of commonsense.”

“We need to encourage private property owners to take part in the process,” said **Representative Barbara Cubin (WY)**. “This bill provides incentives to private property owners to come to the table and it will force the federal government to respect the property rights of farmers, ranchers and landowners.”

Congressman Denny Rehberg (MT) remarked, “It will likely take years to fix the problems created by the ESA, but our children and our environment will be better for our having begun that process today.”

“The ESA is an ineffective law for species recovery and the catalyst for confrontation between members of the human species everywhere it comes into play,” **Congressman C.L. “Butch” Otter of Idaho** said. “The only species Chairman Pombo’s bill won’t help is the fund-raising cash cow that litigious environmental groups have enjoyed for decades – and that species deserves to be endangered.”

Western Caucus Chairman Rep. Chris Cannon (UT) said, “This legislation places us on the right track toward alleviating the current litigation burden and improving species recovery under the ESA. Chairman Pombo deserves to be commended for his hard work.”

The Western Caucus is comprised of members of Congress committed to protecting the interests and ideals of the West. More information on the Caucus can be found at: <http://www.house.gov/cannon/wc/index.htm>.

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